NC DHHS K-12 COVID-19 Response Updates & Resources

Non-Public Schools Webinar

March 26, 2021

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Thank you for being here!

- **Before we get started:**
  - Make sure to respect other attendees by staying on mute
  - Video on or off is up to you
  - As questions come to mind, please enter them in the chat box, changing audience to “everyone” not just “panelists”
  - We will try our best to reply in writing or live, but it may have to wait until Q&A
  - This webinar will be recorded and shared with you via email, along with today’s slides

Welcome to your **second** statewide webinar, North Carolina Non-Public Schools!

Watch Webinar 1 again!

NC Non-Public Schools Town Hall

December 10, 2020

Recap: Who Are NC's Non-Public Schools?

796

Private Schools in NC

1/5

Of All Schools In The State Are Private Schools

65%

Of NC's Private Schools are Religious

104,000

Students Enrolled In Private Schools

2019-2020 school year

6.4%

Of All Students In The State Go To Private Schools

Today's Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Brief Updates: K-12 Public Health Requirements
3. Focus Topic: Rapid Antigen Testing
4. Q&A

Speakers

Geoff Coltrane
Senior Education Advisor, Office of the Governor

Natalie Ivanov
Program Director, COVID-19 Testing, NCDHHS

Rebecca Planchard
Senior Policy Advisor, NCDHHS

Special Thank-You To:

- **Chena Flood,** Department of Administration
- **Joe Haas,** NC Christian School Association
- **Linda Nelson**, NC Association of Independent Schools

Welcome

Geoff Coltrane, MPP

Senior Education Advisor

Office of the Governor

Brief Updates: K-12 Public Health Requirements

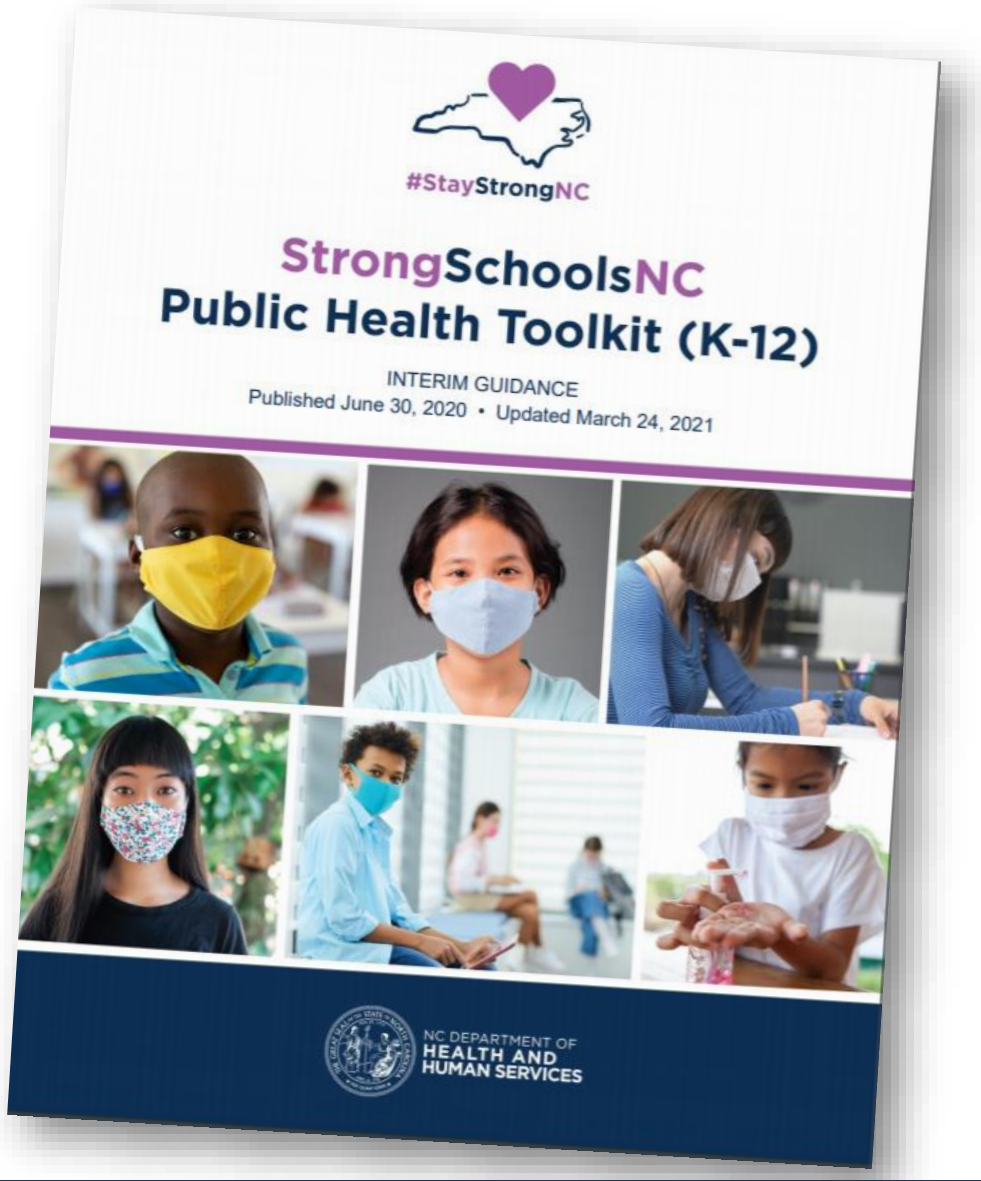
CDC K-12 Guidance Released Feb., Updated March

- Directs consistent use of layered mitigation strategies, especially universal and correct use of masks and physical distancing.
- 3 ft. physical distancing recommended at a minimum for students, 6 ft. for adults
- Recommends vaccines as an additional mitigation effort: teachers and school staff should be prioritized for receiving vaccine when supply is available.
- Recommends that K-12 schools support local health departments in facilitating contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine efforts.
- **Recommends diagnostic and screening testing for COVID-19 as an additional layer of mitigation**.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html

March StrongSchoolsNC Guidance Updates – Aligned to CDC

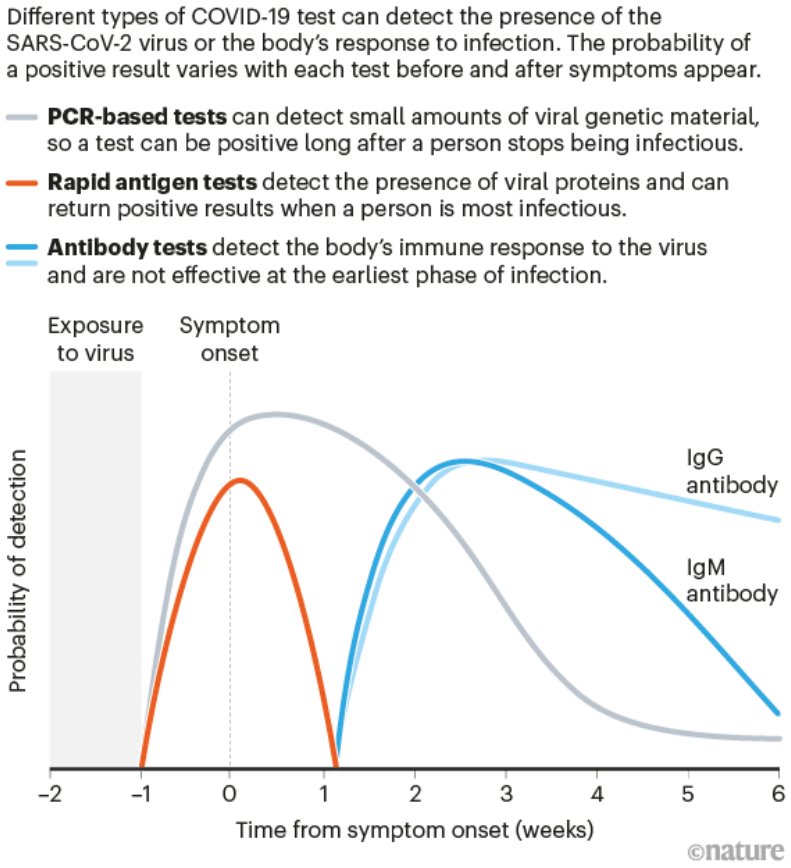
- Daily symptom screenings are no longer required: they can be considered for adults and are not recommended for children
  - However, exclusion based on symptoms, close contact, or a positive case still applies
- K – 12th Schools should return to in-person instruction to the fullest extent possible up to five days per week under Plan A or Plan B.
- Incorporated CDC physical distance recommendations for Plan A only that at least 3 feet of physical distance between children and 6 feet between adults; No changes to Plan B (remains 6 feet of distance required at all times)
- The CDC does not include recommendations about physical barriers, such as plexiglass

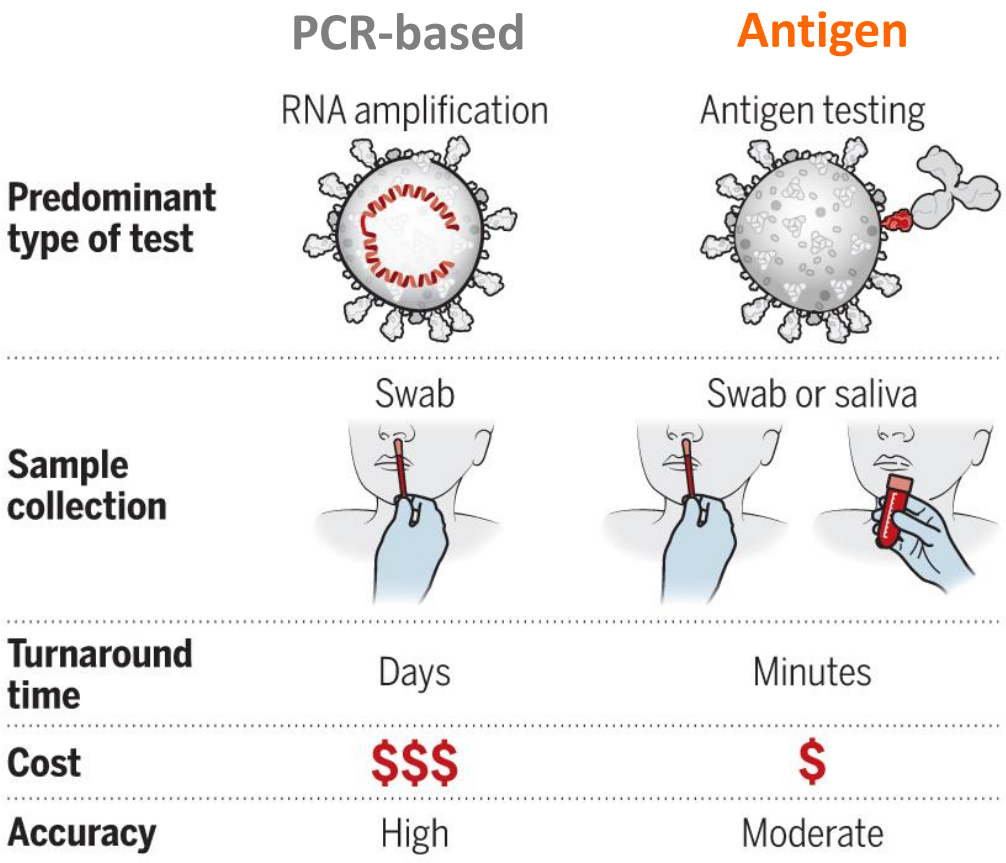


Focus Topic: Rapid Antigen Testing

Review: How do we test for COVID-19?

- **Molecular/PCR-based** tests and **antigen** tests diagnose <u>current</u> infection
- **Antibody** tests detect <u>prior</u> infection
- Abbott BinaxNOW are antigen tests; samples are collected via nasal swab





CDC Recommends COVID-19 testing in K-12 Schools

The CDC released its updated K-12 School Operational Strategy on March 4th, 2021, which encourages testing as an additional layer of prevention in schools – NC guidance aligns

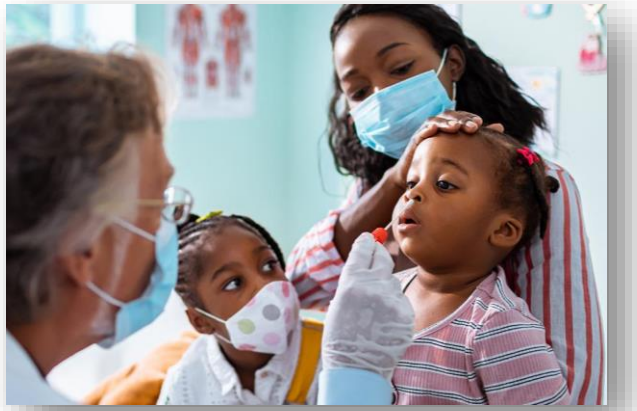
- **Testing should be combined with other key mitigation strategies**, such as NC's StrongSchools requirements: universal mask use, physical distancing, handwashing and maintaining healthy and clean facilities

- **Diagnostic testing** for individuals who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 at school or have recent known close contact toa person with COVID-19

- **Screening testing** for all K-12 staff (adults) on a regular, routine basis (e.g., weekly) using rapid tests.

NC DHHS Expanding Access to Free Antigen Tests for K-12 Schools

- **In the fall, the US Department of Health and Human Services procured and distributed to states Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 tests**
  - Designed for rapid diagnosis of active infections within 5-7 days of symptom onset
  - Generally, less sensitive than PCR tests (greater chance of false negatives).
  - **Who can do the tests?** Someone who has undergone a training from BinaxNOW (does not need to be a healthcare professional). Testing personnel must collect and report patient and result information properly.
  - **Where can the tests be done?** A location that has a **CLIA certificate of waiver and meet CLIA regulatory requirements**



- **NC DHHS used these free tests to conduct a pilot of COVID-19 testing in K-12 schools**
  - From Dec 2020 to Mar 2021, 57,000 free tests were sent to 18 schools districts and 13 charter schools to conduct testing at over 200 schools
  - 3 check-in meetings along with a pre- and post- survey were used to support participants and gather qualitative and quantitative data about participating schools' experience

NC DHHS Expanding Access to Antigen Tests for K-12 Schools

Based on lessons learned from our pilot, NC DHHS will be expanding access to COVID-19 rapid testing to K-12 non-public schools on an opt-in basis to add further protection for our students, school staff and teachers.

What	Non-public schools may choose to request tests for: 1. Testing of all individuals, including students, their families and school staff, who are symptomatic or had known exposure to a confirmed positive case 2. Once weekly screening of all adults – including teachers and staff 3. Routine screening of student athletes and / or screening prior to tournaments 4. Screening related to Spring Break, graduation or special events
Who	All non-public schools are eligible to request tests
When	All non-public schools are able to request tests through at least the end of the calendar school year
How	Non-public schools interested in receiving the free tests are responsible for developing a plan to meet all testing requirements before submitting online request form to NC DHHS

To Receive Free COVID-19 Tests, Non-Public Schools Must:

Participating private schools are responsible for meeting all of the below requirements:

1. Obtain an CLIA certificate or partner with an entity with a CLIA certificate
2. Secure a signed physician order for testing or elect to use the Statewide Order
3. Ensure all testing personnel have completed training modules
4. Obtain consent prior to testing students and notify parents/guardians when testing performed
5. Verify ability to meet DHHS reporting requirements
6. Maintain an adequate supply of PPE to perform tests
7. Adhere to standards to properly handle and dispose of medical waste
8. Plan for safe isolation and quarantine

Schools can choose to meet these requirements **independently or partner** with a provider, laboratory or other similar organization.

Funding Resource: Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS)

What is EANS?	• Program administered by the Office of the Governor in conjunction with DPI
Who is eligible? What services are eligible?	• Nonpublic schools are eligible to apply for this funding • Schools may apply to receive services or assistance to **address educational disruptions caused by COVID-19** (i.e. physical barriers, COVID-19 testing and tracing) • Schools may also **receive reimbursement** for any service or assistance related to educational disruptions caused by COVID-19 **employed after 3/13/20**
More Information	• The EANS application opened on **Thursday, March 25th** and closes on **Friday, May 21st** • More information about this funding source can be found on the DPI website

Next Steps for Non-Public Schools interested in free antigen tests

- Online request form and testing guidance launch online via NC DHHS: **Available now!**

- Non-public schools can **begin requesting tests** via online request form as soon as they are able to demonstrate that they meet all testing requirements

- **NC DHHS will provide the following resources to support interested schools:**
  - Weekly office hours to answer questions from interested or enrolled sites
  - Weekly DHHS-hosted training sessions on test results reporting platform, *eCATR PTR*
  - StrongSchoolsNC@dhhs.nc.gov for ongoing questions and support

Q & A

Reach out to StrongSchoolsNC@dhhs.nc.gov for ongoing questions and support about NC DHHS K-12 COVID-19 response

Appendix: Vaccine Communications Resources

New Resources

New materials available

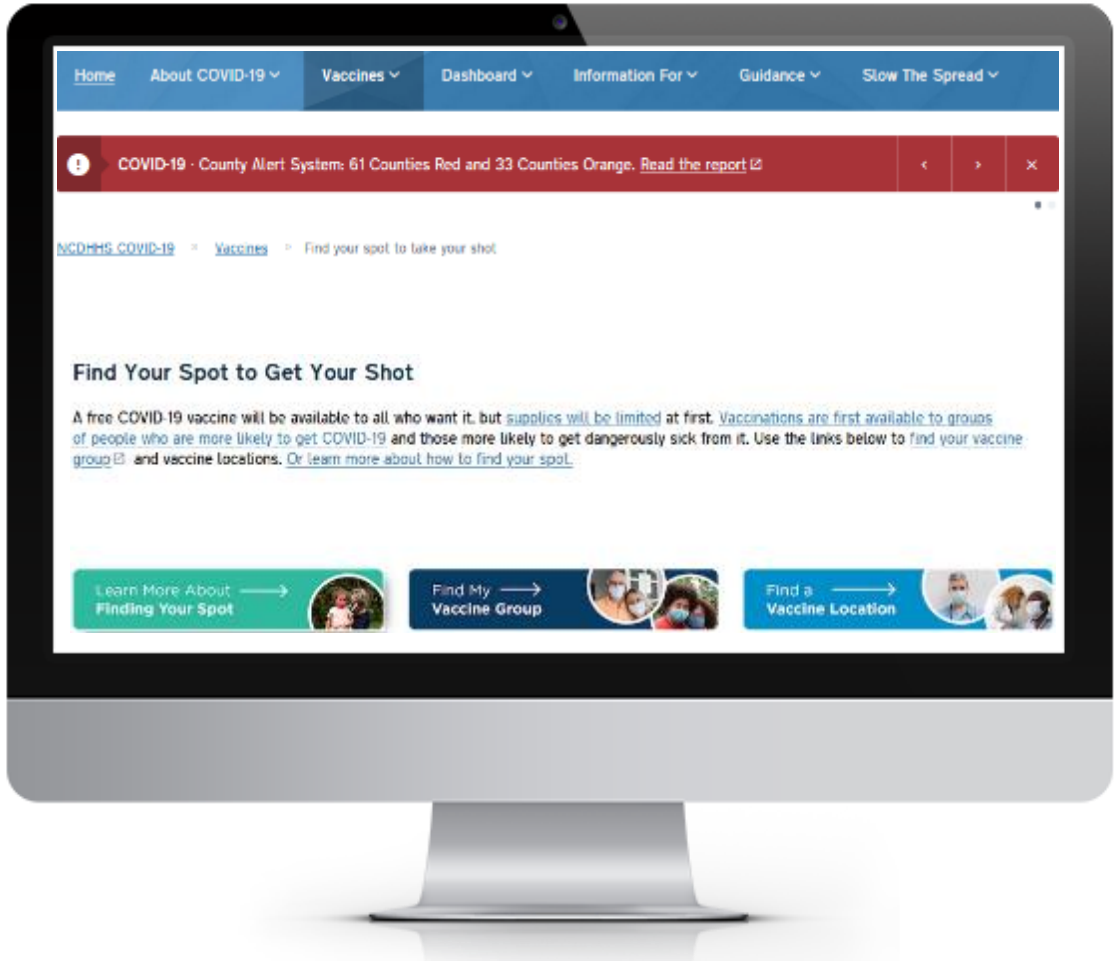
- Top Ten Facts
- Developing COVID-19 Vaccines infographic
- Social media graphics and content
- Community posters

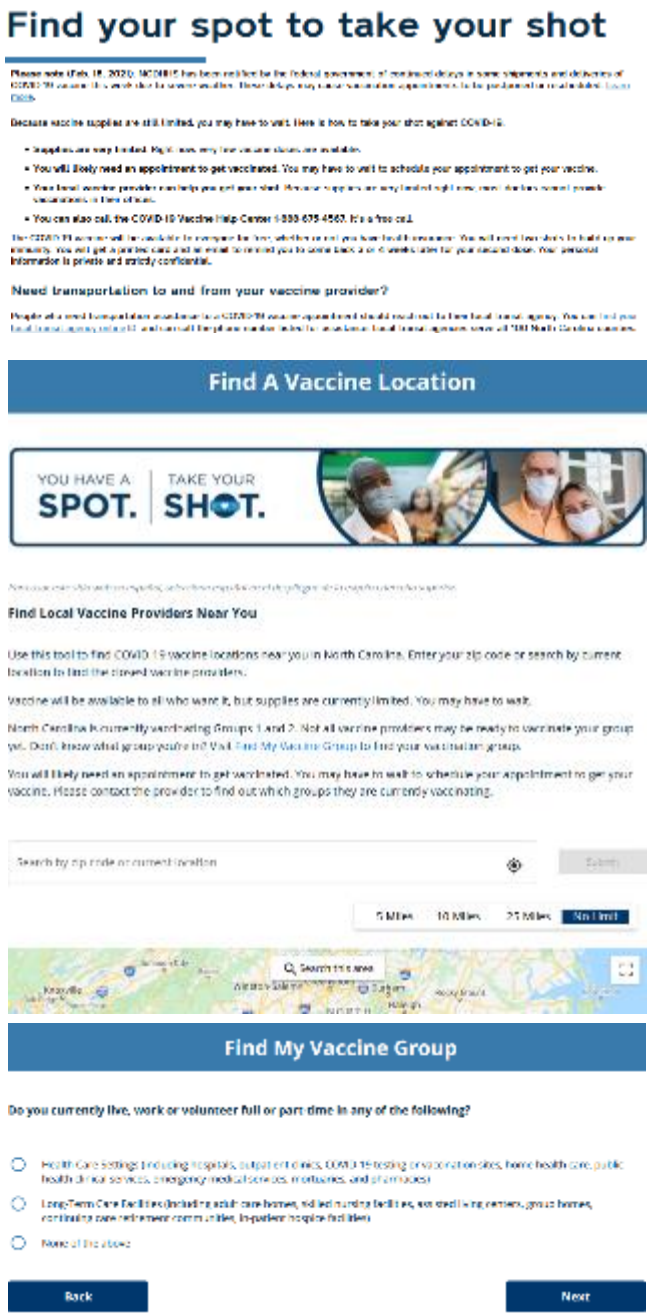
Materials in English and Spanish

New Easy-to-Use Toolkit

https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-communications-toolkit

Expanded Web Tools:
Eligibility Tracker, Vaccination Locator





http://yourspotyourshot.nc.gov/